

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Ernestina Depine,

Plaintiff,

v.

Progress Financial Company d/b/a Progreso
Financiero; and DOES 1-10, inclusive,

Defendants.

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: Civil Action No.: 1:14-cv-13644
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: **COMPLAINT**
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For this Complaint, the Plaintiff, Ernestina Depine, by undersigned counsel, states as follows:

JURISDICTION

1. This action arises out of Defendants' repeated violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq. ("FDCPA"), violations of the Massachusetts Consumer Protection Act, M.G.L. c. 93A § 2, et seq., and the invasions of Plaintiff's personal privacy by the Defendants and their agents in their illegal efforts to collect a consumer debt.

2. Supplemental jurisdiction exists pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

3. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b), in that the Defendants transact business in this District and a substantial portion of the acts giving rise to this action occurred in this District.

PARTIES

4. The Plaintiff, Ernestina Depine ("Plaintiff"), is an adult individual residing in Brockton, Massachusetts, and is a "consumer" as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

5. Defendant Progress Financial Company d/b/a Progreso Financiero ("Progress"), is a California business entity with an address of 3141 Middlefield Road, Redwood City, California

94063, operating as a collection agency, and is a “debt collector” as the term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

6. Does 1-10 (the “Collectors”) are individual collectors employed by Progress and whose identities are currently unknown to the Plaintiff. One or more of the Collectors may be joined as parties once their identities are disclosed through discovery.

7. Progress at all times acted by and through one or more of the Collectors.

ALLEGATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL COUNTS

A. The Debt

8. The Plaintiff allegedly incurred a financial obligation (the “Debt”) to MetroPCS (the “Creditor”).

9. The Debt arose from services provided by the Creditor which were primarily for family, personal or household purposes and which meets the definition of a “debt” under 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(5).

10. The Debt was purchased, assigned or transferred to Progress for collection, or Progress was employed by the Creditor to collect the Debt.

11. The Defendants attempted to collect the Debt and, as such, engaged in “communications” as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(2).

B. Progress Engages in Harassment and Abusive Tactics

12. Beginning in January, 2014, Progress contacted Plaintiff in an attempt to collect the Debt.

13. Progress placed calls to Plaintiff’s cellular phone at the excessive rate of up to four calls per week.

14. During several conversations with Plaintiff Progress failed to inform Plaintiff that the purpose of the call was to collect the Debt, and that any information obtained thereafter could be used for the purpose of debt collection.

15. Plaintiff requested that Progress cease the collection calls until Plaintiff was provided with validation of the Debt. In response, Progress refused to send Plaintiff validation and continued to harass Plaintiff with frequent calls.

16. Progress failed to provide Plaintiff with an initial letter informing Plaintiff of her rights within five days after the initial communication.

C. Plaintiff Suffered Actual Damages

17. The Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer actual damages as a result of the Defendants' unlawful conduct.

18. As a direct consequence of the Defendants' acts, practices and conduct, the Plaintiff suffered and continues to suffer from humiliation, anger, anxiety, emotional distress, fear, frustration and embarrassment.

COUNT I
VIOLATIONS OF THE FDCPA 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq.

19. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

20. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d in that Defendants engaged in behavior the natural consequence of which was to harass, oppress, or abuse the Plaintiff in connection with the collection of a debt.

21. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692d(5) in that Defendants caused a phone to ring repeatedly and engaged the Plaintiff in telephone conversations, with the intent to annoy and harass.

22. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e in that Defendants used false, deceptive, or misleading representations or means in connection with the collection of a debt.

23. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(11) in that Defendants failed to inform the consumer that the communication was an attempt to collect a debt.

24. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692f in that Defendants used unfair and unconscionable means to collect a debt.

25. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(a) in that Defendants failed to send Plaintiff an initial letter within five days of its initial contact with Plaintiff as required by law.

26. The Defendants' conduct violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692g(b) in that Defendants continued collection efforts even though the Debt had not been verified.

27. The foregoing acts and omissions of the Defendants constitute numerous and multiple violations of the FDCPA, including every one of the above-cited provisions.

28. The Plaintiff is entitled to damages as a result of Defendants' violations.

COUNT II
VIOLATIONS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT,
M.G.L. c. 93A § 2, et seq.

29. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

30. The Defendants employed unfair or deceptive acts to collect the Debt, in violation of M.G.L. c. 93A § 2.

31. The Defendants initiated communication via telephone with the Plaintiff in excess of two calls in each seven-day period in violation of 940 CMR § 7.04(1)(f).

32. Defendant's failure to comply with these provisions constitutes an unfair or deceptive act under M.G.L. c. 93A § 9 and, as such, the Plaintiff is entitled to double or treble damages plus reasonable attorney's fees.

COUNT III
INVASION OF PRIVACY BY INTRUSION UPON SECLUSION

33. The Plaintiff incorporates by reference all of the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

34. The Restatement of Torts, Second, § 652(b) defines intrusion upon seclusion as, "One who intentionally intrudes...upon the solitude or seclusion of another, or his private affairs or concerns, is subject to liability to the other for invasion of privacy, if the intrusion would be highly offensive to a reasonable person."

35. Massachusetts further recognizes the Plaintiff's right to be free from invasions of privacy, thus Defendants violated Massachusetts state law.

36. The Defendants intentionally intruded upon Plaintiff's right to privacy by continually harassing the Plaintiff with the above-referenced phone calls.

37. The telephone calls made by Defendants to the Plaintiff were so persistent and repeated with such frequency as to be considered, "hounding the plaintiff," and, "a substantial burden to her existence," thus satisfying the Restatement of Torts, Second, § 652(b) requirement for an invasion of privacy.

38. The conduct of the Defendants in engaging in the illegal collection activities resulted in multiple invasions of privacy in such a way as would be considered highly offensive to a reasonable person.

39. As a result of the intrusions and invasions, the Plaintiff is entitled to actual damages in an amount to be determined at trial from Defendants.

40. All acts of Defendants and their agents were committed with malice, intent, wantonness, and recklessness, and as such, Defendants are subject to punitive damages.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff prays that judgment be entered against Defendants:

1. Actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(1) against Defendants;
2. Statutory damages of \$1,000.00 pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1692k(a)(2)(A) against Defendants;
3. Costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(3) against Defendants;
4. Double or treble damages plus reasonable attorney's fees pursuant to M.G.L. c. 93A § 3(A);
5. Actual damages from Defendants for the all damages including intentional, reckless, and/or negligent invasions of privacy in an amount to be determined at trial for the Plaintiff;
6. Punitive damages; and
7. Such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

TRIAL BY JURY DEMANDED ON ALL COUNTS

Dated: September 17, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

By /s/ Sergei Lemberg

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